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EXCISE

7-M

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Control 4080

Rec'd March 9, 1950
5:33 a.m.

FROM: Brussels

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 362, March 8, 7 p.m.

0471

SENT DEPARTMENT, REPEATED LONDON 75, PARIS 94, THE HAGUE 36, LUXEMBOURG 5.

XR
755.01

On March 12 as authorized by the law of February 11, 1950 about five million Belgians will be called upon to vote yes or no to the single question provided for in the "popular consultation"; i.e. "do you desire King Leopold III to resume the exercise of his constitutional powers"? This is not a plebiscite; Parliament will not be legally bound to act according to this poll, although undoubtedly it would rescind the King's exile if he obtained a strong majority. He himself has promised to abdicate if he receives 55 percent or less of the vote. Our despatch 289, March 4 reviews developments in this question since 1944.

755.11/3-850

For weeks factional leaders and other parties in interest have extended themselves to whip a fairly apathetic public into a state of emotional effervescence. By and large the public has retained its calm and there is evident a certain fatigue over this five year old question. Individual enmities have been sharpened and some political careers are being damaged. Spaak who has spearheaded the opposition would seem unfortunately to have suffered a distinct loss of prestige as he feared he would.

Prophesy

SECRET FILED MAR 15 1950

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY J. L. SMITH DATE NOV 2 2 1982

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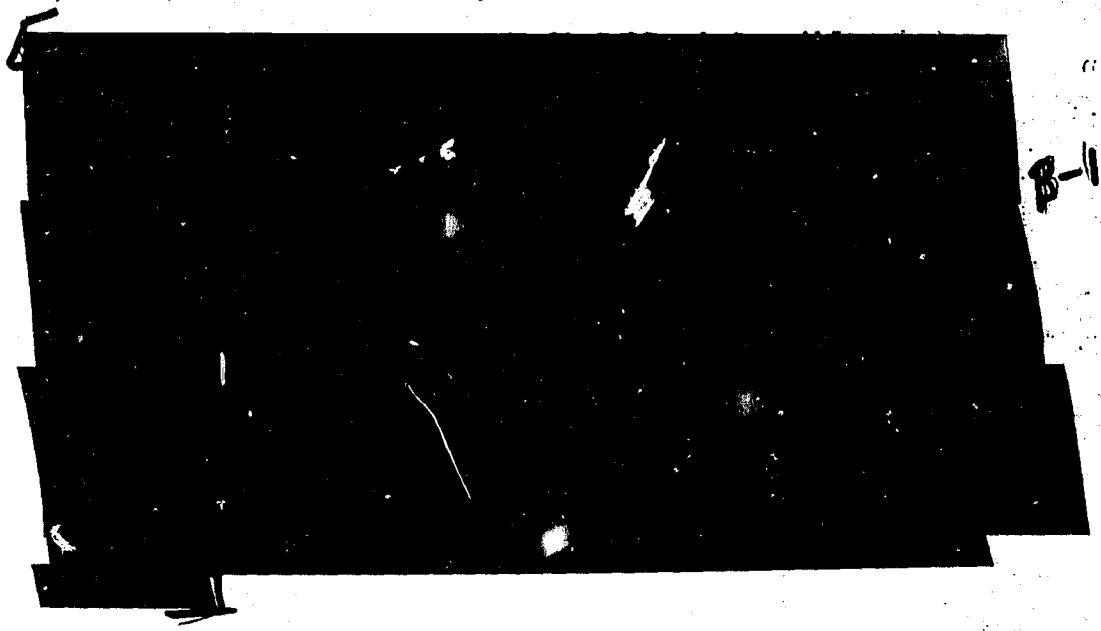
PRIORITY

[illegible], 152, [illegible], from Brussels

Prophecy re the result of next Sunday's vote of course would be ungrateful but my observation leads me to believe that the vote in favor of the King's return will be adequate to insure the necessary parliamentary majority which will permit him to resume his functions. By "adequate" is meant 60 percent or more.



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